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**Submission no. 376**  
AUTHORISED: 

My apologies for the lateness of this submission.

I believe the lack of access to medical services is a major problem in encouraging and supporting breastfeeding.

In Canberra wait time for a health visit to the baby clinic (Maternal and Child Health Nurse) is 6 weeks. Obviously if you had feeding problems they need addressing quicker than that. There are drop in sessions (3 hours twice a week), but these involve waiting up to 2.5 hours and are often quickly filled, with a sign then put up 'pls come back next week'. Canberra has minimal health checks for babies. There is a check at 4 weeks, 8 weeks and then 6 months. I understand other states have monthly visits, which would be better.

Canberra also has almost no doctors who bulk bill. Those who do are in 'medical centres' where you cannot make an appointment, but must sit and wait for up to 5 hours. Not something you want to do with an unhappy baby with feeding issues. Also in Canberra it is nearly impossible to get access to a doctor on the day you ring for an appointment.

I consider this problem with even getting access to medical advice to be a major problem in encouraging breastfeeding. It is all very well to educate medical staff to provide better advice, but if it takes days/weeks to see them, hours waiting on the day, and costs 55.00, then most people will not access the services.

Yours sincerely

Cass Proudfoot